

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for packaging contact lenses, said apparatus comprising:
a plurality of discrete inspection lens carriers, said carriers being
movable within said apparatus; and
a plurality of contact lens containers, a single one of said containers
being mounted on a single one of said carriers.

2. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each carrier has a cavity, each
container having a bowl, said bowl of said container being receiving in said cavity of
said carrier.

3. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each of said carriers receives
solely one container.

4. The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein each of said carriers receives
solely one container.

5. An apparatus for automatically packaging contact lenses, said apparatus
comprising:

a plurality of lens carriers;

a plurality of contact lens containers, one of said containers being
mounted on a respective one of said carriers;

a plurality of lifts;

a plurality of platens, each of said platens being individually supported by one of said lifts, each of said containers being mounted on a respective one of said platens;

a mandrel disposed above said platens; and

wherein said lifts apply pressure, within a predetermined range, to each of said containers.

6. The apparatus according to claim 5, further comprising a lidstock maneuvering system operative to engage a lidstock and to position said lidstock between said mandrel and said plurality of platens.

7. The apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said mandrel is selectively moveable between a retracted upper position and an engaged lower position to seal said lidstock to said containers, and wherein in said lower position, a pressure applied by said mandrel against each of said platens is maintained within said predetermined range by the respective lifts, thereby compensating for tolerance differences in the thickness of said containers and the thickness of said lidstock to ensure that an adequate seal is formed between said lidstock and each of said containers.

8. The apparatus according to claim 5, further comprising a pressure transducer being connected to said lifts, said pressure transducer generating a signal indicative of the pressure applied by each of said lifts.

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9. An apparatus for automatically packaging contact lenses, said apparatus comprising:

a lens carrier;

a plurality of contact lens containers being mounted on said carrier;

a plurality of lifts;

a plurality of mandrels disposed above said carrier, each of said mandrels being individually supported by one of said lifts;

wherein said lifts apply pressure, within a predetermined range, to each of said mandrels.

10. The apparatus according to claim 9, further comprising a lidstock maneuvering system operative to engage a lidstock and to position said lidstock between said mandrels and said carrier.

11. The apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said mandrel is selectively moveable between a retracted upper position and an engaged lower position to seal said lidstock to said containers, and wherein in said lower position, a pressure applied by said mandrel against each of said platens is maintained within said predetermined range by the respective lifts, thereby compensating for tolerance differences in the thickness of said containers and the thickness of said lidstock to ensure that an adequate seal is formed between said lidstock and each of said containers.

12. The apparatus according to claim 9, further comprising a pressure transducer being connected to said lifts, said pressure transducer generating a signal indicative of the pressure applied by each of said lifts.

5 *8/24* 13. An apparatus for automatically packaging contact lenses, said apparatus comprising:

a plurality of contact lens containers,

10 a heated mandrel disposed above said plurality of containers, said heated mandrel being moveable between a retracted position above said plurality of containers and an engaged position immediately adjacent to said plurality of containers; and

15 a lidstock being selectively movable between a retracted position and an inserted position, said inserted position being between said heated mandrel and said plurality of containers, whereby in said inserted position the lidstock is fixedly held in position at least until said heated mandrel contacts said lidstock while moving to said engaged position.

14. The apparatus according to claim 13, further comprising a plurality of lens carriers, each of said containers being mounted on a respective one of said carriers.

20 *8/24* 15. An apparatus for packaging contact lenses, said apparatus comprising:

a lidstock having indicia printed thereon, said lidstock being fed from a roll under tension; and

a vision alignment inspection system having means for checking the print quality on said lidstock and for simultaneously checking for registration of said lidstock within said apparatus.

5 16. The apparatus of claim 15, further comprising a printing system and a cutting system, wherein said lidstock is fed from said roll under tension into said printing system and said cutting system, and said vision alignment inspection system is located after said printing system.

10 17. The apparatus of claim 15, further comprising a printing system and a cutting system, wherein said lidstock is fed from said roll under tension into a printing system and said cutting system and said alignment inspection system is located between said printing system and said cutting system.

15 18. The apparatus of claim 15, further comprising a heat seal apparatus, wherein said lidstock is mechanically controlled after said vision alignment inspection system to prevent misregistration of said lidstock in said heat seal apparatus.

20 19. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein said cutting system is located after said printing system.

20. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein said cutting system is located after said printing system.